

## **2009 How do we integrate spirituality into ordinary existence**

[Speaker 2] (0:04 - 1:33)

For the past several years I've been making a concerted effort to live a especially sort of, you know, conscious, present, spiritual path and doing yoga and meditation and retreats and that sort of thing. And now when I hear people talk about, you know, spiritual stuff, I kind of cringe. It's like, I feel like there's this spiritual thing that's like separate, you know, separate from this, you know, this special dimension.

At first it was really great, you know, because I was meditating like, you know, ten hours in a weekend and I could tell everybody how cool it was and, you know, how special and unique I felt, you know, practicing this special spiritual life. And now I just, I listen to what you say and other people say and I just want to hear about like how I'm no one. And I mean that sincerely in being in this, but just not having to, even though, you know, I am conscious, all these words that just seem to get in the way a lot of the time.

I mean, you know, they're concepts and everything. But I just, I just, I hear the, I feel the sweetness of not, just really not having to be this special, unique, you know, spiritual person on top of being a regular person. It's like this, you know, double-decker sandwich that I got to carry around and I'm, and it's, and it's getting stale and I, I don't know.

I don't know if there's a question in there, but maybe you could speak, speak to that. Thank you. Yes.

Okay. Thanks.

[Speaker 1] (1:36 - 2:32)

Well, you overdid it a little bit with your spiritual practice, and hence the reaction now, because you have to get back to some normality after all that specialness over that, both your spiritual practice, where you thought of yourself as special and your practice as special, you went quite far to an extreme. And you're now experiencing the reaction to that extreme. And that's good.

In other words, you don't want to hear about anything spiritual anymore. I've had it, right? So you overdid it.

Now there's a reaction. Don't mention to me anything spiritual anymore, you say. But of course, you know, the famous expression, what is it, the baby and the bathwater?

Don't throw out your baby with the bathwater.

[Speaker 2] (2:32 - 2:33)

It's all spiritual.

[Speaker 1] (2:34 - 2:34)

It's all spiritual.

[Speaker 2] (2:35 - 2:36)

And it's so separate.

[Speaker 1] (2:36 - 6:21)

So now first you went to that extreme. Now you go to an extreme of reaction and eventually you end up in the middle where every moment is spiritual as it is. There's nothing special.

Spiritual is not separate from daily existence. So that's when we say spiritual, we're not referring to some realm out there that is to be achieved at some point where you become more special than you are now. It's not going to happen.

It's here and now. We're going deeper into the here and now that's spiritual. Now you are a little bit tired of these words because you went too far to that extreme.

So you have to realize if you're a little bit perhaps like a Christian who was once very religious and suddenly got fed up. And then occasionally I have people in talks who are ex-Christians. And the moment I say occasionally I say Jesus said they go oh don't talk to me about or anything it's remotely Christian.

I don't want to hear that. I've had all that. So they don't realize because of that.

Of course they had a somewhat distorted view of what the whole thing was about. So they didn't but they can't stand the terms anymore. And that's fine.

It's a phase. You will come through that. Maybe it's happening already.

It's the ordinariness. Spiritual means the more spiritual you are the more ordinary you are. The more non-special you are.

And again for the ego that means okay I have to become more non-special. How do I become ordinary? Okay that's...

I need somebody to teach me to be ordinary. So I understand your dilemma and perhaps you understand it also. And so this nothing special, chopping wood, carrying water.

Zen defines spirituality ultimately. What is the spiritual life? Chopping wood, carrying water which is the kind of thing you do in Zen monasteries.

Daily doing in my case it's buying some food in the store, going to have a cup of coffee, taking the dog for a walk in the forest, listening to the BBC World News, having a glass of wine occasionally with a meal, watching a movie. Nothing extraordinary and so quite an ordinary existence. And so it's hiding in there.

The spirituality is in there. It's not away from there. To just this.

And so I'm sorry about these words that we use. But language is limited. So we have to use certain words.

And perhaps the emotion around these words then eventually is going to go and they become neutral again. And you can use them for what they are, which is simply useful pointers no more. Thank you.